

ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION AGENDA
TWO HUNDRED FOURTH MEETING

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Lake Level Conference Rooms A, B, and C
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL

January 26, 2010 10:00 a.m.

*Documentary Material Enclosed

Item 1: Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

Item 2:* Adoption of Agenda

Item 3:* Approval of Minutes of the 203rd Meeting Minutes, September 22, 2009

Item 4: 2010 Meeting Schedule

May 4, 2010 – Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center, Cypress
September 21, 2010 – Burpee Museum of Natural History, Rockford

Item 5: INPC Staff Report

REPORT
Randy Heidorn
Nature Preserves Commission

Item 6: IDNR Staff Report

REPORT
Don McFall
IDNR, Office of Resource Conservation

Item 7: Endangered Species Protection Board Staff Report

REPORT
Anne Mankowski
Endangered Species Protection Board Manager

Item 8:* Kankakee Co. – Addition to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve,
Registration

Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, owned by Dr. Marianne Hahn, was originally registered in 2002. Subsequent additions to the Land and Water Reserve,

registered by both Dr. Hahn and The Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (occurring in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008), have increased the size of protected property from 62 acres to 118 acres. This proposal is for the registration of a 3.3-acre tract as an addition to Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve, bringing the total acreage up to 121.3 acres. This addition will provide additional habitat for many species of conservation concern, buffer high-quality natural communities, and enable more efficient management of the Land and Water Reserve. Sweet Fern Savanna Land and Water Reserve is recognized on the INAI (#1581) for its high-quality dry-mesic sand savanna and for the habitat it provides for at least 14 state-threatened or endangered plants and the state-threatened regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*) and a reptile. Sweet Fern Savanna lies within the Kankakee Sand Area Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division of Illinois. According to the IWAP, this site is located in the Kankakee Sands Conservation Opportunity Area and supports many of its conservation goals including protection for numerous species in greatest need of conservation. Management and allowable uses are compatible with the long-term preservation of Sweet Fern Savanna and its notable natural features.

REPORT

Bryan Eubanks

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Registration Approval

Item 9:* Piatt Co. – Addition to Upper Sangamon River Land and Water Reserve, Registration

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) seeks to register a 151.0-acre tract adjacent to the northeast part of the Upper Sangamon River Land and Water Reserve near Monticello in Piatt County as an addition to the land and water reserve. In 2003, the IDNR registered in perpetuity the Upper Sangamon River Land and Water Reserve, a 640.27-acre area along the Sangamon River that protects a 2.3-mile segment of the River. The site occurs in the Grand Prairie Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division. The Upper Sangamon River is recognized by the INAI (#1449) as a biologically significant stream that provides important habitat for a relatively high diversity of mussels including the state-threatened slippershell, *Alasmidonta viridis*. In addition, a state-threatened bird and two state-listed reptiles occur in or near the Land and Water Reserve. The Sangamon River, in the vicinity of the proposed addition, provides habitat for two fish and three mussel species which are species in greatest need of conservation, as identified in the IWAP and supports several action steps identified for the Streams Campaign. The proposed addition protects a 1.2 mile segment of the corridor that lies north of the Sangamon River. The proposed addition also conserves floodplain forest, upland forest and a small former crop field. The Land and Water Reserve adjoins Allerton Park, an extensive park that preserves nearly 1,000 acres of forest and is recognized by the INAI (#1043). The Land and Water Reserve and Allerton Park together comprise one of the largest remaining forests in central Illinois. Conserving the proposed addition to the Land and Water Reserve in its natural condition contributes to the high natural quality of the River by reducing runoff and sediments entering the river, stabilizing

the stream banks, and providing good fish habitat. The Upper Sangamon River Land and Water Reserve, together with the proposed addition, is one of 13 protected natural areas along the Sangamon River corridor that collectively preserve more than 11.5 miles of the Sangamon River and over 4,410 acres of forest and other natural land along the Sangamon River corridor in Piatt and Champaign counties.

REPORT
John Griesbaum
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Registration Approval

Item 10:* Lake Co. – Fields of Cambridge Sedge Meadow and Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Fields of Cambridge Homeowner's Association seeks preliminary approval for dedication of the Fields of Cambridge Sedge Meadow and Prairie as an Illinois nature preserve. The proposed 112-acre nature preserve, consisting of 36 acres as nature preserve and 76 acres as nature preserve buffer, is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in east-central Lake County. The proposed nature preserve lies within the boundary of the Oak Grove Botanical Area Inventory site (INAI #0654), an unprotected matrix of 401 acres of open space that extends along the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the North Branch of the Chicago River. This site has been recognized by the INAI as a Category II site because of the presence of a relatively large and stable population of a state-endangered and federally listed plant species. This plant species, and 96 other native plant species recorded from this site, are associated with the grade C/D sedge meadow and grade C/D wet-mesic and mesic prairies at the proposed nature preserve. The prairies at this site are ranked first (or highest tier) for conservation in the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan, and the wetlands have been included on the Advanced Identification for Lake County in recognition of their high biological and functional value. Protection of this site is consistent with recommendations of the *North Branch of the Chicago River Open Space (Green Infrastructure) Plan* which identified the proposed nature preserve as a high-quality natural area and with elements of the IWAP.

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 11:* McHenry Co. – Freundschaft Weise Buffer Addition to Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve, Dedication

Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve (INAI #1413) is a 36.4-acre natural area dedicated by the Boone Creek Watershed Alliance in 2005. In 2006, Legacy Homes dedicated an additional 6.4 acres as a buffer addition to Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve. Robert and Ruth Wohnrade request preliminary approval for dedication of 1.5 acres to be known as the Freundschaft Weise buffer

addition to Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve. If approved, this dedication would increase the amount of currently protected land at this site from 42.8 acres to 44.3 acres. The proposed buffer addition is located along the southern boundary of the Nature Preserve. The buffer area includes a relict sedge meadow natural community that is contiguous with the high-quality sedge meadow found within Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve. The buffer area also includes a portion of an artificial pond and a natural drainageway that intermittently conveys excess surface water away from Boloria Meadows to the south. Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve is located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. Dedication of the proposed Freundschaft Weise buffer addition will provide long-term legal protection for a high-quality sedge meadow and land suitable as buffer which is contiguous to the existing Nature Preserve. Protection, restoration, and expansion of the Nature Preserve supports action steps identified in the IWAP for the Prairie Campaign, Wetlands Campaign, Forests Campaign, and Invasive Species Campaign. Dedication will also allow for better land management and restoration activities within the natural wetland basin found at Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow Nature Preserve.

REPORT

John Nelson

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 12:* McHenry Co. – Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve, Dedication

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County seeks preliminary approval for dedication of approximately 40.3 acres of land to be known as Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve. The proposed nature preserve is located along the western boundary of the City of Woodstock. It is part of a larger natural wetland complex covering approximately 260 acres and consisting of a mosaic of prairies, wetlands, and oak savannas. Yonder Prairie has a rich diversity of plant species and habitats that support local populations of wildlife, including a state-endangered reptile. The proposed nature preserve contains a high-quality wet-mesic prairie natural community that is recognized on the INAI (#1568). The dedication of Yonder Prairie as an Illinois nature preserve will help protect a relict natural community and at least one state-listed animal species. Protection and restoration of the proposed Yonder Prairie Nature Preserve supports the IWAP under the Prairie Campaign, Wetlands Campaign, Forests Campaign, and Invasive Species Campaign. It is anticipated that this dedication will also serve as a starting point for protecting other adjacent qualifying lands. If approved, Yonder Prairie will be the Land Conservancy of McHenry County's first dedicated nature preserve.

REPORT

John Nelson

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Preliminary Approval for Dedication

Item 13:* Lake Co. – Grainger Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

The LCFPD seeks final approval for dedication of Grainger Woods as an Illinois nature preserve. The proposed 169-acre nature preserve lies embedded within the 304.8 Grainger Woods Conservation Preserve; both are located in the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division. The proposed Grainger Woods Nature Preserve encompasses slightly more than half of the Grainger Flatwoods INAI site (#0667) and supports grade C dry-mesic upland forest, mesic upland forest, wet-mesic upland forest, northern flatwoods and an old-field community. The wet-mesic upland forest and the northern flatwoods are considered critically imperiled globally and imperiled globally, respectively. Plant inventories have recorded 260 native plant species, including ten state-listed plant species. All of the state-listed plant species have habitat affinities for the “wet” conditions associated with the wet-mesic upland forest and northern flatwoods. Dedication of this site is consistent with recommendations from the “*Biodiversity Recovery Plan for the Chicago Wilderness Region*,” and elements of the IWAP Forests Campaign which calls for ecological connectivity among forests and other habitat patches. Nine bird species, one amphibian, and three insects recorded from Grainger Woods Conservation Preserve have been identified in the IWAP as species in greatest need of conservation. The LCFPD plans to route and construct a bike trail along the southern border of the proposed nature preserve adjacent to Everett Road. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 203rd Meeting in September, 2009 (Resolution 2047).

REPORT

Steven Byers

Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Final Approval for Dedication

Item 14:* Lake Co. – Buffer Addition to Lyons Prairie and Woods Nature Preserve, Dedication

The LCFPD seeks final approval for dedication of a 124.7-acre buffer addition to Lyons Prairie and Woods Nature Preserve, increasing the size of the Nature Preserve from 147 to 271.7 acres. The site is located within the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division in Lake County. Lyons Prairie and Woods Nature Preserve and approximately the western half of the proposed addition lie within the Lyons Woods INAI (#1250). This site was originally identified by the INAI as “notable,” and then added as a Category II site for the presence of four state-listed plant species. One of these plant species has also been recognized as federally threatened. The proposed addition includes three grade C natural plant communities; dry-mesic upland forest, graminoid fen, and wet prairie; an old field community; and a tree plantation. The dry-mesic upland forest that extends from the existing nature preserve into the proposed nature preserve buffer addition was referred to during the original natural areas inventory as either “old second growth” or “mature second growth”. Lyons Prairie and Woods Nature Preserve and the proposed nature preserve buffer addition are located in the Illinois Beach – Chiwaukee Prairie Conservation

Opportunity Area (COA) identified in the IWAP. Located atop the Zion City Moraine, this site represents the only protected part of the COA that is not part of the Zion Beach-ridge plain upon which Illinois Beach State Park and Spring Bluff Nature Preserve are located. Protection of this site is a priority for the Lake Michigan Action Plan recently adopted as an amendment to the Chicago Wilderness Biodiversity Recovery Plan. The Commission conferred preliminary approval for dedication at its 203rd Meeting in September, 2009 (Resolution 2048).

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Final Approval for Dedication

Item 15:* Mason Co. – Tomlin Timber Nature Preserve, Access Easement Request

Gregory Johnson and Reta Power (the Evelyn L. Daniel Estate) are seeking approval of a 30-foot permanent non-exclusive easement across the 19.6-acre Tomlin Timber Nature Preserve (INAI #0191), which has been owned by the Save the Prairie Society since 1998. Tomlin Timber was dedicated as an Illinois nature preserve in 1987 for its 18.5-acre grade A sand forest dominated by black oak (*Quercus velutina*). At that time, Tomlin Timber was owned by Dr. Ramona T. Mattson. For at least the last 60 years, access to the 160 acres adjacent to the western boundary of Tomlin Timber has been accomplished by using an unpaved field lane located “along the south 20 feet more or less” of Tomlin Timber. This is according to an affidavit dated September 22, 2009 and signed by James M. Tomlin, nephew of the late Dr. Mattson. The affidavit does not specifically mention the actual width of the lane. In 1976, the INAI noted the existence of this lane along the southern boundary of the site. This lane was mentioned again in the dedication proposal as “a farm road [that] borders the south boundary [of Tomlin Timber]....” The lane was not excluded from the Nature Preserve dedication. A narrow strip of woods, with mature black oak trees, lies between the lane and the actual southern boundary of the property. Although no formal easement for ingress and egress was ever drafted to access the 160 acres to the west of the Nature Preserve, this use has been tacitly acknowledged and has continued to the present time. Measurements of the heavily used portion of the lane (i.e., width of compacted tire tracks) was approximately 9 feet wide, more or less; adding marginal areas yielded a width of approximately 14 feet. A gate at the western end of this lane, just beyond the boundary of Tomlin Timber Nature Preserve, measured 15 feet wide. The Daniel Estate is requesting to codify this farm lane as an easement of 30 feet and is presenting this document today for Commission approval. The landowner, Save the Prairie Society, has agreed to allow an easement of 20 feet.

REPORT
Jerry Tice
Attorney for Gregory Johnson and
Reta Power
Tom Lerczak, Jenny Skufca

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of Easement for Ingress
and Egress

Nature Preserves Commission

Item 16:* Tazewell Co. – Dirksen-McNaughton Woods Land and Water Reserve, Bridge Replacement

The City of Pekin is seeking approval to proceed with the Federal Highway Administration's process for making a *de minimus* finding regarding plans to replace the Sheridan Road bridge/culvert structure at Lick Creek within a portion of the Dirksen-McNaughton Woods Land and Water Reserve (INAI #1741), an 828-acre site owned by the Pekin Park District. Dirksen-McNaughton Woods was registered as a land and water reserve to protect nearly 700 acres of second growth forest that has supported a breeding bird community which includes 17 species sensitive to the effects of forest fragmentation. The 25.3-foot-wide bridge across Lick Creek is proposed for replacement due to its age and deterioration. The new bridge will be 38 feet wide, including a 5-foot-wide sidewalk, which will allow hikers to avoid vehicles in the roadway. The present bridge does not have a sidewalk. The roadway right-of-way is by prescriptive use, and was excluded from the registered area. In order to replace the bridge, approximately 0.06 acres outside of the current prescriptive-use footprint will be impacted, including three trees greater than six inches in diameter at breast height and two sand bars (0.05 acres) in the Creek, which were determined by the Illinois Natural History Survey to be wetlands of low natural quality. None of the forest along Sheridan Road may be considered high quality. Any desirable trees that may have to be removed and the impacted wetlands will be mitigated. This project will not result in additional permanent forest fragmentation, although the area within the construction footprint will certainly be disturbed. Control measures will be taken to protect Lick Creek from erosion and sedimentation during construction. Following construction, the City of Pekin will seek a permanent easement on the road right-of-way, the revised boundaries of which will be determined by a professional survey, for roadway maintenance. The project proposal will enhance public safety but will require encroachment into the Land and Water Reserve. This is a procedural approval to proceed to seek public input through a Federal Highway Administration process and not approval of the project or easements.

REPORT

George B. Merkel
Maurer-Stutz, Inc.
Tom Lerczak, Jenny Skufca
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED

Approval to Proceed with *de minimus* finding Process

Item 17:* McHenry Co. – Hack-ma-tack National Wildlife Refuge, Letter of Support

Letters of support from the governors of Illinois and Wisconsin have been sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to conduct a feasibility study for establishing a National Wildlife Refuge in the bi-state region of northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin. Consequently, representatives of the USFWS conducted an initial assessment and on-site survey of a feasibility study area for a proposed

National Wildlife Refuge in December 2009. The proposed refuge lies within the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture. Joint Ventures are USFWS-sponsored collaborative partnerships that integrate migratory bird priorities into conservation actions at multiple landscape scales. Over half (36 of 70) of the priority bird species identified in this Joint Venture use the area for nesting. Similarly, over half (51 of 83) of the bird species identified as Conservation Priorities by the USFWS Region 3 nest within the area. Nearly 8,000 acres of land in the study area are owned by natural resource agencies (McHenry County Conservation District – 6,057 acres; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – 1,560 acres). In Illinois, the proposed feasibility study area supports 10 natural communities (including 3 considered globally significant by The Nature Conservancy), 588 native plant species, 201 bird species, 1 federally listed plant species and 57 state-listed endangered or threatened plant and animal species. The proposed National Wildlife Refuge lies within or adjacent to the Lake-McHenry Wetland Complex Conservation Opportunity Area (COA), a key provision of the IWAP. Embedded within this COA are DNR-recognized Resource Rich Areas and High Quality Aquatic Areas, Important Bird Areas, and Portfolio Areas identified by The Nature Conservancy. At least 20 wildlife species considered in greatest need of conservation nest or breed within the proposed feasibility study area. Establishment of a proposed National Wildlife Refuge has been identified as one of 21 Green Legacy Projects recently celebrated at the Burnham Plan Centennial. In addition, the protected and unprotected open spaces located within the proposed National Wildlife Refuge are identified for their natural resource values in the Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision. Considerable outreach to the public and local communities about the proposed National Wildlife Refuge has been conducted and is continuing by Friends of Hack-ma-tack. Friends of Hack-ma-tack, and its partners, are pleased to recommend that the INPC endorse a feasibility study of the bi-state region for a National Wildlife Refuge and promote its establishment.

REPORT
Steven Byers
Nature Preserves Commission

ACTION TO BE CONSIDERED
Approval of Letter of Support

Item 18: Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Item 19: Other Business

Item 20: Adjournment